

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-63. (Cancelled)

64. (Currently Amended) A device for improving heart valve function, the device comprising:

a first anchoring member;

a second anchoring member;

a ~~flexible~~ connection member ~~configured to connect~~ connecting the first and second anchoring ~~members~~ member, the ~~flexible~~ connection member being further configured to be positioned adjacent an external surface of a heart wall; and

~~at least one protrusion~~ a structure configured to be positioned in contact with an external surface of the heart wall such that the ~~at least one protrusion~~ structure exerts an inward force against the heart wall proximate a valve,

wherein the inward force is sufficient to alter valve function.

65. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 64, wherein the ~~at least one protrusion~~ structure protrudes from the ~~flexible~~ connection member.

66. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 64, wherein the structure ~~at least one protrusion~~ is configured to exert an inward force sufficient to draw leaflets of the valve together.

67. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, wherein the anchoring members are configured to secure the device to the heart.

68. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 64, wherein the connection flexible member is configured to be selectively adjustable so as to alter relative positions between at least one of the first and second ~~anchors~~ anchoring members and the structure protrusion.

69. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 68, wherein the flexible connection member is configured to be selectively lockable relative to the first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure ~~at least one first anchor, second anchor, and protrusion~~.

70. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 69, further comprising at least one pin associated with the first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure ~~at least one first anchor, second anchor, and protrusion~~ and configured to penetrate the flexible connection member so as to selectively lock the connection flexible member to the first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure ~~at least one first anchor, second anchor, and protrusion~~.

71. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 64, wherein the connection flexible member is made of a plurality of filaments.

72. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 71, wherein the filaments form a braided structure.

73. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 64, further comprising an elongate member configured to extend transverse a heart chamber and be secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members ~~anchors~~.

74. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 64, wherein the valve is a mitral valve.

75. (Currently Amended) A method for improving heart valve function, the method comprising:

providing a device comprising a first anchoring member, a second anchoring member, a ~~flexible~~ connection member connecting the first and second anchoring members, and ~~at least one protrusion~~ a structure between the first and second anchoring members;

positioning the ~~flexible~~ connection member adjacent an external surface of a heart wall; and

positioning the ~~at least one protrusion~~ structure in contact with an external surface of the heart wall such that the ~~at least one protrusion~~ structure exerts an inward force against the heart wall proximate a valve, wherein the inward force is sufficient to alter valve function.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is sufficient to draw leaflets of the valve together.

77. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 76, wherein the valve leaflets define a line of coaptation and positioning the structure protrusion includes positioning the structure protrusion such that the inward force is exerted substantially orthogonal to the line of coaptation.

78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the valve is a mitral valve.

79. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, further comprising adjusting a position of the device while observing the valve function.

80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is exerted on an annulus of the valve.

81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is sufficient to reposition papillary muscles of the valve.

82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, further comprising positioning the device outside the epicardium of the heart.

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 82, further comprising attaching the device to the epicardium.

84. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein the inward force is exerted throughout the cardiac cycle.

85. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 75, further comprising selectively adjusting the ~~flexible~~ connection member so as to alter relative positions between at least one of the first and second anchoring members and the structure ~~protrusion~~.

86. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 85, further comprising selectively locking the ~~flexible~~ connection member to the at least one first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure ~~protrusion~~.

87. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 86, wherein at least one pin is associated with the at least one first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure ~~protrusion~~ and the method further comprises penetrating the ~~flexible~~ connection member with the pin so as to selectively lock the connection ~~flexible~~ member to the at least one first anchoring member, second anchoring member, and structure ~~protrusion~~.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 75, wherein providing the device further comprises providing an elongate member configured to extend transverse

a heart chamber and be secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members.

89. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 88, further comprising positioning the first and second anchoring members adjacent first and second heart wall portions substantially opposite each other and drawing the first and second heart wall portions toward each other.

90. (Currently Amended) A device for improving heart valve function, the device comprising:

a first ~~anchor~~ anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue;

a second ~~anchor~~ anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue;

and

an ~~interconnecting~~ connection member connecting the first ~~anchor~~ anchoring member and the second ~~anchor~~ anchoring member,

wherein the ~~interconnecting~~ connection member is configured to be selectively adjustable so as to alter a tension of the ~~interconnecting~~ connection member between the first ~~anchor~~ anchoring member and the second ~~anchor~~ anchoring member, and

wherein at least a structure attached to portion of the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member is configured to be positioned exterior to a heart chamber proximate a valve such that the device exerts an inward force on the heart wall sufficient to alter the valve function.

91. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 90, wherein the ~~interconnecting~~ connection member is flexible.

92. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 90, wherein the ~~interconnecting~~ connection member is made of a plurality of filaments.

93. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 92, wherein the plurality of filaments form a braided structure.

94. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 90, wherein the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member is configured to be adjustably connected to at least one of the first and second anchoring members ~~anchors~~.

95. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 94, wherein the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member is configured to be selectively lockable relative to at least one of the first and second anchoring members ~~anchors~~.

96. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 95, further comprising a pin configured to selectively penetrate the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member so as to selectively lock the ~~interconnecting~~ connection member to at least one of the first and second anchoring members ~~anchors~~.

97. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 94, wherein the ~~interconnecting~~ connection member is configured to be adjustably connected to the first ~~anchor~~ anchoring member and to the second anchoring member ~~anchor~~.

98. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 90, wherein the first anchoring member ~~anchor~~ and the second anchoring member ~~anchor~~ are configured to be secured to an epicardial layer of the heart.

99. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 90, wherein further ~~comprising at least one protrusion the structure connected to the interconnecting member and is~~ configured to be positioned between the first anchoring member ~~anchor~~ and the second anchoring member ~~anchor~~.

100. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 90, further comprising an elongate member configured to extend transverse the heart chamber and be secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members ~~anchors~~.

101. (Currently Amended) A method for improving heart valve function, the method comprising:

providing a device comprising a first ~~anchor~~ anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue, a second ~~anchor~~ anchoring member configured to be secured to heart tissue, and a connection ~~an interconnecting~~ member connecting the first ~~anchor~~ anchoring member and the second anchoring member ~~anchor~~; and

positioning at least a portion of the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member exterior to a heart chamber proximate a valve such that the device exerts an inward force on the heart sufficient to alter the valve function, wherein a structure is attached to the portion of the connection member,

wherein the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member is configured to be selectively adjustable so as to alter a tension of the interconnecting member between the first ~~anchor~~ anchoring member and the second anchoring member ~~anchor~~.

102. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the inward force is sufficient to draw leaflets of the valve together.

103. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 102, wherein the valve leaflets define a line of coaptation and positioning the portion of the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member includes positioning the portion such that the inward force is exerted substantially orthogonal to the line of coaptation.

104. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the valve is a mitral valve.

105. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the inward force is exerted on an annulus of the valve.

106. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, wherein the inward force is sufficient to reposition papillary muscles of the valve.

107. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, further comprising positioning the device outside the epicardium of the heart.

108. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 101, further comprising selectively adjusting the tension of the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member.

109. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 101, further comprising adjusting a relative position of the first and second anchoring members ~~anchors~~ so as to adjust the tension in the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member.

110. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 109, further comprising selectively locking the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member to at least one of the first anchoring member ~~anchor~~ and the second anchoring ~~anchor~~ after adjusting the relative position.

111. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 110, wherein the selectively locking includes penetrating the connection ~~interconnecting~~ member with a pin.

112. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 101, further comprising securing the first anchoring member ~~anchor~~ and the second anchoring member ~~anchor~~ to an epicardial layer of the heart.

113. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 101, wherein providing the device further comprises providing an elongate member configured to extend transverse the heart chamber and secured to the heart via the first and second anchoring members ~~anchors~~.

114. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 101, further comprising exerting the inward force on the heart wall throughout a cardiac cycle.

115. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 101, wherein ~~providing the device includes providing a device comprising at least one protrusion connected to the interconnecting member and~~ the structure is disposed between the first anchoring member ~~anchor~~ and the second anchoring member ~~anchor~~.